丙戊酸(VPA)治疗脊髓损伤(SCI)的作用机制研究

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摘要

脊髓损伤(spinal cord injury,SCI)会导致不同程度的脊髓运动功能障碍、部分感觉丧失和括约肌功能障碍。SCI分为原发性损伤和继发性损伤两个阶段,原发性损伤期间的坏死和继发性损伤阶段的细胞凋亡、氧化应激和自噬导致大量细胞受损,进而导致永久性神经功能障碍。组蛋白去乙酰化酶(Histone deacetylase,HDAC)在调节细胞活性及基因转录中起关键作用,脊髓损伤导致的神经功能障碍与蛋白质乙酰化水平的不平衡和相关的转录功能障碍有关。丙戊酸(Valproic Acid,VPA)是一种HDAC抑制剂,临床常作为抗癫痫药物使用。研究表明,VPA可能具有治疗中枢神经系统疾病的潜力。VPA通过抑制 HDAC 进而调节氧化应激、细胞自噬、离子失衡、小胶质细胞分化及抑制炎症反应发挥神经保护作用。本文综述了 VPA 治疗 SCI 的相关分子机制。

关键词: 脊髓损伤; 丙戊酸; 信号通路; 综述

Study on the mechanism of valproic acid (VPA) in the treatment of spinal cord injury (SCI)

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Abstract

Spinal cord injury (SCI) causes varying degrees of spinal motor dysfunction, partial sensory loss, and sphincter dysfunction. SCI can be divided into two stages: primary injury and secondary injury. Necrosis during primary injury and apoptosis, oxidative stress and autophagy during secondary injury lead to a large number of cell damage, which resulting in a permanent neurological dysfunction. Histone deacetylase (HDAC) plays a key role in the regulation of cellular activity and gene transcription. The neural

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dysfunction caused by spinal cord injury is related to the imbalance of protein acetylation level and transcriptional dysfunction. Valproic Acid (VPA) is an HDAC inhibitor that is often used clinically as an antiepileptic drug. Research suggests that VPA may have the potential to treat central nervous system disorders. AS an inhibitor of HDAC, VPA plays a neuroprotective role by regulating oxidative stress, autophagy, ion imbalance, microglia differentiation and inhibiting inflammatory response. This article reviews the molecular mechanism of VPA in the treatment of SCI.

Key Words: spinal cord injury; valproic acid; signaling pathways; review

SCI 导致脊髓功能障碍,并与多种全身性并发症相关,如心血管、肺和胃肠道疾病^[1]。原发性损伤阶段虽然短暂,但直接对脊髓造成的物理损伤会引起不可逆性损害。原发性损伤所致的结构损伤形成了继发性损伤的病理条件,继发性损伤的急性期涉及神经炎症、离子失衡、氧化应激、谷氨酸兴奋毒性、神经源性休克和一系列细胞和分子紊乱^[2-4]。研究表明,VPA 可以通过调节离子失衡、细胞自噬、抑制炎症反应和氧化应激等多种途径对中风、创伤性脑损伤、阿尔茨海默病等多种疾病具有治疗作用^[5-7]。在 SCI 的早期阶段,结构性损伤导致内皮细胞通透性增加、内皮血管舒缩功能障碍和血脊髓屏障(blood-spinal cord barrier,BSCB)损伤。BSCB 破坏后导致血液成分进入脊髓实质,最终导致局部水肿离子失衡、神经胶质和神经元损伤、以及炎症因子和大量自由基的产生。内质网(ER)应激同样在脊髓继发性损伤中发挥显著作用^[8]。在 SCI 大鼠模型中,ER 应激可降解紧密连接和粘附连接蛋白等BSCB 的组成部分,因此对它们的损害不仅会使 BSCB 功能障碍,还会导致许多炎性细胞进入 BSCB^[9-10]。

目前,对于 SCI 的治疗措施包括手术减压、药物(如大剂量激素、神经营养因子和抗生素)和康复治疗等[11]。药物是最常用的治疗方法,HDAC 抑制剂通过增加组蛋白乙酰化,调节基因转录和上调神经营养基因,减少炎症和调节自噬发挥其神经保护作用[12],因此 HDAC 抑制剂有望成为脊髓损伤治疗的有效干预措施。VPA 是一种广谱 HDAC 抑制剂,在临床上用于治疗各种神经系统疾病,如癫痫、精神疾病和偏头痛^[13]。现有研究表明,VPA 在 SCI 后可通过减弱 BSCB 破坏^[14],调节细胞自噬和离子失衡^[15]以及减少氧化应激炎症反应^[16]等途径促进脊髓损伤的恢复。

1 丙戊酸减少自通量

自噬通过溶酶体(Lysosome)降解途径回收和降解有毒物质、异常蛋白质和受损细胞器来

维持细胞内稳态。自噬起始首先在细胞质中形成隔离膜隔离受损的物质,称为吞噬团(Autophagosome)。吞噬团伸长和闭合后,产生的双膜囊泡自噬体吞噬异常物质后与溶酶体融合形成自溶酶体(Autolysosome),其中的内容物通过溶酶体降解并回收^[17]。磷脂酰乙醇胺轻链 3(LC3)是一种自噬调节蛋白,位于自噬泡内膜,当细胞自噬开始后,LC3 前体加工转为 LC3- II ,进而结合自噬胞膜表面的磷脂酰乙醇胺(PE)形成 LC3- II 。通常 LC3- II 蛋白表达直接反映了细胞自噬能力,若其表达越高,细胞自噬能力越强。一些研究已经证明自噬标记物 LC 3-II 在 SCI 后 24 小时内表达上调^[18],因此细胞自噬可能是 SCI 继发性损伤的重要过程。

mTOR 属于磷脂酰肌醇 3 激酶(PI-3K)家族,参与调节 DNA 修复和生长。mTOR 通路有两个关键因素,mTORC1 和 mTORC2。mTORC1 控制蛋白质合成、自噬、增殖、细胞生长、应激反应和细胞代谢,而 mTORC2 参与细胞极性和细胞存活的调节^[19]。mTORC 1 通过去磷酸化和磷酸化自噬相关蛋白 ATG 13 和 Unc-51 样自噬激活激酶 1(U1k1)调节自噬^[20]。ULK1 位于触发自噬过程的最上游和关键位置并与 ATG13、ATG101 和 200 kDA 家族相互作用蛋白(FIP200)形成复合物。ULK1 在自噬发生过程中起调节和介导作用,在机体营养丰富的条件下,通过减少 ULK1 和 ATG13 的磷酸化降低 ULK1 活性,导致自噬抑制^[21],而当机体营养物质不足时,mTORC1 会增强 ULK1 的活性促进自噬的发生,自噬的过程也是为机体提供营养的过程^[22]。

在 PI3K 通路中,Akt 位于 mTORC 1 的上游,调节 mTORC 1 介导的信号通路。在通过不同的信号通路激活 PI 3 K 之后,PIP 2 转化为 PIP 3 进而募集下游 Akt 到内膜,并通过磷酸化活化。Akt 的激活会降低结节性硬化症复合体 TSC 1/2 的活性并调节 mTORC 1 介导的自噬信号通路^[23]。PTEN 是 PI3 K 的拮抗剂,可减少磷脂酰肌醇 3,4-二磷酸(PIP 2)和磷脂酰肌醇 3,4,5-三磷酸(PIP 3)的产生,并且充当 Akt/mTOR 信号传导途径的抑制剂。PTEN 还可直接抑制脊髓损伤后的轴突再生,而抑制 PTEN,可以促进 SCI 后的轴突再生^[24]。AMPK 是一种代谢调节因子,在真核细胞中表达,可感应细胞能量状态,通过激活分解代谢途径产生能量,同时也参与自噬过程,是一种自噬正性调节剂^[25]。AMPK 与 mTOR 信号通路具有拮抗关系,AMPK 直接磷酸化 Ser467、Ser555、Thr574 和 Ser637 以增加 ULK1 活性,并通过促进 TSC 1/TSC 2 异二聚体的组装来抑制 mTORC 1 活性^[26],因此 AMPK 的激活可促进自噬的发生。

自噬在维持细胞内蛋白质合成与降解平衡方面起着重要作用,SCI后,Beclin-1和LC3等自噬标记物表达上调^[27],这对于脊髓损伤的恢复有积极的作用,因为自噬激活后可减少

损伤面积,抑制神经炎症,从而保护运动神经元^[28]。但是自噬是一把双刃剑,过度的自噬激活会导致细胞损伤加重。**VPA** 可显著降低脊髓损伤后 **Beclin-1** 和 **LC 3** 的表达水平^[29],使蛋白质的降解处于相对平衡的状态,从而加快脊髓损伤的恢复。

自噬激活后可保护微管免受颈上级神经节蛋白 10(SCG10)的降解,并促进 SCI 后的轴突再生^[30]。SCG10 是微管动力学的调节剂,JNK 1 在 Ser 62/73 上磷酸化 SCG 10 并负调节 SCG 10 活性^[31],而丝裂原活化蛋白激酶磷酸酶 1 (MAPK1) 通过 MAPK1-JNK 轴介导 JNK 去磷酸化从而激活 JNK。VPA 同样可激活 JNK,发挥保护微管蛋白的作用^[32]。Netrin-1 是一种趋化因子,在神经系统发育过程中作为轴突迁移的信号,并参与自噬调节。在 SCI 中,netrin-1 抑制 mTOR1,激活 AMPK 以刺激自噬,还可激活 MAPK1,通过 MAPK1-JNK 轴抑制 SCG10,从而改善功能恢复^[33]。VPA 还可抑制 Netrin-1,发挥调节脊髓损伤后的脊髓自噬稳态促进脊髓损伤恢复的作用^[34]。

2 丙戊酸调节神经干细胞

成人脊髓含有表现出分化为神经元潜力的多能神经干/前体细胞(neural stem/progenitor cells,NSPCs)群体。从脊髓分离的 NSPCs 是用于修复 SCI 后脊髓中神经损伤的细胞来源^[35]。NSPCs 具有自我更新、不对称分裂、迁移至损伤部位和产生新神经细胞的特点,是中枢神经系统中一类具有分化为神经元、星形胶质细胞和少突胶质细胞能力的祖细胞。但是 SCI 后内源性神经发生和髓鞘再生非常有限,因为活化的 NSPCs 主要分化为星形胶质细胞而不是神经元或少突胶质细胞^[36],从而会增加神经胶质瘢痕形成。因此增强 NSPCs 的活性以产生更多的神经元和更少的星形胶质细胞将是 SCI 的治疗策略之一。

研究表明 VPA 促进 SCI 后 NSPCs 的神经发生潜能,在短期 SCI 病程(≤7天)中,VPA 通过抑制炎症介质发挥神经保护作用。长期病程中(≥4周),VPA 可促进 NSPCs 向神经元分化^[37]。在长期病程中,VPA 会显著增加损伤脊髓中新生神经元标记物双皮质素(DCX)和成熟神经元标记物神经元特异性核蛋白(NeuN)的表达^[38],并抑制其分化成星形胶质细胞和少突胶质细胞^[39-40]。八聚体结合转录因子 4(Oct 4)可以将星形胶质细胞转化为神经元,VPA 经由 PI3 K/Akt/mTOR 途径还增加了 Oct 4 启动子的活性^[41],显著提高人星形胶质细胞向成神经细胞转化的效率,同时还能促进轴突再生。作为 HDAC 抑制剂,VPA 在增加乙酰化染色质水平的同时调节许多基因的表达^[42],其神经保护特性还涉及调节神经营养因子,VPA 上调的神经生长因子包括脑源性神经营养因子(BDNF)和胶质细胞系源性神经营养因子(GDNF)。BDNF 和 GDNF 能避免神经元死亡,促进受损神经元的再生和分化。它们在 SCI 条件下对神经元存活和神经突生长起重要作用^[43]。

3 丙戊酸改善炎症反应

炎症反应是机体的一种保护机制,然而过度炎症反应可阻碍神经修复和再生。SCI 后出 而和组织坏死可快速触发小胶质细胞和星形胶质细胞的活化,激活许多炎症相关通路^[44], 同时募集外周免疫细胞到病变区域,在病变区域发生炎症细胞级联反应,进一步导致血脊髓 屏障破坏[45]。小胶质细胞的活化和炎症反应最终诱导神经元死亡并导致永久性神经功能缺 损[46]。小胶质细胞的活化分为经典活化(M1型)和替代活化(M2型)。M1型释放导致 组织损伤的促炎介质, 而 M2 型释放抗炎和营养组织的相关因子[47]。小胶质细胞从抗炎(M2 型)样向促炎(M1型)的表型转变在小胶质细胞活化及其介导的神经炎症反应中发挥了重 要作用[48],SCI 诱导的 M1 型细胞活化和随后释放的炎性因子,如白介素(IL)、肿瘤坏死 因子(TNF)和干扰素(INF)等,会导致直接神经元死亡,同时诱导血管内皮细胞表达多 种细胞粘附和趋化性分子^[49]。这些炎症因子会刺激 NO 合成,导致毛细血管通透性增加和 BSCB 功能障碍,同时促进神经元凋亡[50]。SCI 后还会产生大量髓鞘碎片,吞噬细胞在清除 髓鞘碎片的过程会进一步加重炎症反应^[51]。抑制 SCI 诱导的小胶质细胞活化和随后的神经炎 症反应已被证明可改善 SCI 患者的恢复[52]。VPA 治疗使小胶质细胞极化向 M2 型转移,并减 轻了小胶质细胞介导的炎症反应,经 VPA 处理后, M1 型小胶质细胞蛋白(CD 16 和 Iba-1) 的表达受到显著抑制,而 M2 型小胶质细胞蛋白(CD 206)的表达增加^[53]。在其他神经系 统疾病中,如创伤性脑损伤中,VPA 也显著抑制小胶质细胞活化,下调 $IL-1\beta$, IL-6 和 $TNF-\alpha$ 表达,继而抑制炎症反应^[54]。NF-κB 是炎症介质的中心转录因子,在小胶质细胞活化中起 重要作用[55-56]。

由活化的小胶质细胞通过 NF-κB 途径诱导的神经炎症反应同样是继发性损伤的关键促成因素^[57]。NF-κB 信号通路在坏死或受损细胞损伤后激活小胶质细胞分泌大量炎性细胞因子,以及炎症反应的级联放大^[58]。而 STAT 的活化具有缓解多种 NF-kB 驱动的炎症和代谢紊乱的潜力^[59],VPA 通过 STAT 1 介导的 NF-κB 途径的乙酰化,抑制小胶质细胞介导的中枢炎症反应,这依赖于 SCI 后的 HDAC 3 活性^[60],STAT 1 受 HDAC3 的调节,而 VPA 处理抑制了 SCI 后 HDAC 3 的表达和活性,进而增强了 STAT 1 以及 NF-κB p65 乙酰化,乙酰化的 STAT 1 与核 NF-κ Bp 65 形成复合物,抑制 NF-κ Bp p65 核转位和表达,减弱了 SCI 后小胶质细胞介导的中枢炎症反应^[61]。

4 丙戊酸调节氧化应激与离子失衡

在 SCI 炎症反应发生的同时会出现氧化应激及离子失衡^[62], Na⁺通道的过度激活是常见的导致 SCI 加重的机制之一^[63]。Na⁺通过电压门控钠通道(VGSCs)内流对维持神经细胞的

兴奋性和调节细胞稳态具有重要作用^[64]。SCI 中 VGSC 的过度激活也是小胶质细胞活化的起始因素^[65],过量的 Na⁺内流可触发突触前神经元中谷氨酸的释放,导致对突触后神经元的兴奋性神经毒性^[66],高水平的细胞外谷氨酸导致谷氨酸受体过度激活还可引起内皮细胞功能障碍,谷氨酸兴奋性毒性和内皮功能障碍同样会导致 BSCB 功能障碍,最终导致神经元细胞死亡^[67]。Mg²⁺稳态的抑制也可引起谷氨酸神经毒性^[68],Mg²⁺是生物体细胞内的碱性阳离子之一,在许多酶促反应中充当辅因子,合成 DNA 和蛋白质,防止 ROS 诱导的脂质过氧化,在脑缺血期间的神经恢复中起重要作用^[69]。SCI 可引起 Mg²⁺水平的下降和促进脊髓中氧化应激的扩散。在动物实验中观察到经 VPA 治疗的 SCI 组大鼠的 Mg²⁺水平随着 VPA 给药而增加,通过调节 Mg²⁺的稳态和对特异性钠通道的抑制可减少 SCI 中的炎症和星形胶质细胞增生^[70]。Zn 是人体必需的微量营养元素,在机体氧化应激、炎症、伤口愈合和 DNA 损伤修复等多中过程中起作用。Zn²⁺可通过调节谷氨酸信号传导来防止谷氨酸的神经毒性^[71],SCI继发性损伤导致了 Zn²⁺水平显著下降,氧化应激增加。VPA 提升 SCI 后 Zn²⁺的水平是其发挥神经保护作用的机制之一。除此之外,VPA 还可防止 Cr、Cu 和 Fe 等促氧化元素水平的过度增加^[72]。

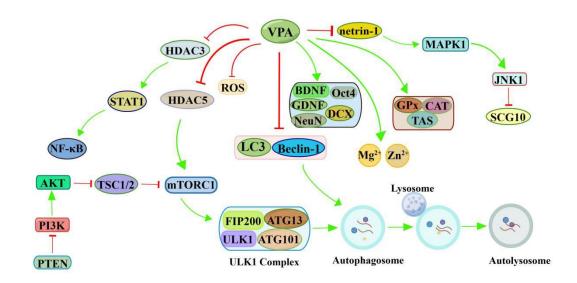


图 1 丙戊酸(VPA)治疗脊髓损伤(SCI)的相关分子机制

Figure 1 Molecular mechanism of valproic acid (VPA) in treating spinal cord injury (SCI)

在离子失衡的同时伴随着氧化应激,SCI 后 TAS、CAT、GPx等抗氧化酶的活性下降, 缺血/再灌注刺激产生的 ROS 和活性氮物质(RNS)引起的氧化应激导致细胞膜脂质、蛋白 质及 DNA 的损伤。多不饱和脂肪酸(PUFA)是细胞膜的主要成分,其结构中双烯丙基亚甲 基的存在使其对 ROS 和活性氮物质非常敏感,使其成为第一攻击目标。脊髓由于其自身高 PUFA 组成和其有限的抗氧化能力,使其在损伤后非常容易受到氧化应激的损伤[73],并且 ROS 与 PUFA 的反应会导致氧化损伤进一步扩散及细胞膜通透性的破坏,最终导致细胞死亡^[74],在体内研究中发现 SCI 继发性损伤期间,用 VPA 治疗 SCI 后大鼠除了显著增加了 TAS,CAT 和 GPx 等抗氧化酶的活性外,Mg²⁺水平与 ROS 诱导的脂质过氧化之间存在反比关系^[75],表明在 SCI 期间 VPA 的神经保护机制之一可能是提高 Mg²⁺的水平,以抑制 ROS 介导的氧化应激。

总结与展望

SCI由于原发性损伤期间的坏死和继发性损伤导致的炎症反应、自噬和氧化应激等导致神经元损伤,进而导致永久性神经功能障碍。目前 SCI 治疗虽然已经取得了进展,但并没有恢复患者的运动功能的有效治疗措施。VPA 作为一种广谱 HDAC 抑制剂,具有潜在的抗氧化和抗炎特性,并可预防缺血再灌注后的氧化应激等并发症。通过激活各种作用机制来保护受损的脊髓组织,包括调节自噬、抑制炎症反应、调节离子失衡与氧化应激、增加抗氧化酶活性和抗氧化元素水平保护 BSCB,从而减轻继发性损伤。VPA 可作为现有临床治疗 SCI 的辅助治疗选择,但在临床治疗 SCI 中使用 VPA 药物组合及剂量需要更多的研究。

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